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CURIOSITIES OF THE BANK OF ENGLAND.

CONSIDERING the world-wide reputation of the Bank of England, it is remarkable how little is generally known as to its internal working. Standing in the very heart of the largest city in the world—a central landmark of the great metropolis—even the busy Londoners around it have, as a rule, only the vaguest possible knowledge of what goes on within its walls. In truth, its functions are so many, its staff so enormous, and their duties so varied, that many even of those who have spent their lives in its service will tell you that, beyond their own immediate departments, they know but little of its inner life. Its mere history, as recorded by Mr Francis, fills two octavo volumes. It will be readily understood, therefore, that it would be idle to attempt anything like a complete description of it within the compass of a magazine article. There are, however, many points about the Bank and its working which are extremely curious and interesting, and some of these we propose briefly to describe.

The Bank of England originated in the brain of William Paterson, a Scotchman—better known, perhaps, as the organiser and leader of the ill-fated Darien expedition. It commenced business in 1694, its charter—which was in the first instance granted for eleven years only—bearing date the 27th July of that year. This charter has been from time to time renewed, the last renewal having taken place in 1844. The original capital of the Bank was but one million two hundred thousand pounds, and it carried on its business in a single room in Mercers' Hall, with a staff of fifty-four clerks. From so small a beginning has grown the present gigantic establishment, which covers nearly three acres, and employs in town and country nearly nine hundred officials. Upon the latest renewal of its charter, the Bank was divided into two distinct departments, the Issue and the Banking. In addition to these, the Bank has the management of the national

debt. The books of the various government funds are here kept; here all transfers are made, and here all dividends are paid.

In the Banking department is transacted the ordinary business of bankers. Here other banks keep their 'reserve,' and hence draw their supplies as they require them. The Issue department is intrusted with the circulation of the notes of the Bank, which is regulated as follows. The Bank in 1844 was a creditor of the government to the extent of rather over eleven million pounds, and to this amount and four million pounds beyond, for which there is in other ways sufficient security, the Bank is allowed to issue notes without having gold in reserve to meet them. Beyond these fifteen million pounds, every note issued represents gold actually in the coffers of the Bank. The total value of the notes in the hands of the public at one time averages about twenty-five million pounds. To these must be added other notes to a very large amount in the hands of the Banking department, which deposits the bulk of its reserve of gold in the Issue department, accepting notes in exchange.

All Bank of England notes are printed in the Bank itself. Six printing-presses are in constant operation, the same machine printing first the particulars of value, signature, &c., and then the number of the note in consecutive order. The paper used is of very peculiar texture, being at once thin, tough, and crisp; and the combination of these qualities, together with the peculiarities of the watermark, which is distributed over the whole surface of the paper, forms one of the principal guarantees against imitation. The paper, which is manufactured exclusively at one particular mill, is made in oblong slips, allowing just enough space for the printing of two notes side by side. The edges of the paper are left untrimmed, but, after printing, the two notes are divided by a straight cut between them. This accounts for the fact, which many of our readers will doubtless have noticed, that only one edge of a Bank-note is smooth, the other three being comparatively ragged. The printing-presses are

so constructed as to register each note printed, so that the machine itself indicates automatically how many notes have passed through it. The average production of notes is fifty thousand a day, and about the same number are presented in the same time for payment.

No note is ever issued a second time. When once it finds its way back to the Bank to be exchanged for coin, it is immediately cancelled; and the reader will probably be surprised to hear that the average life of a Bank-note, or the time during which it is in actual circulation, is not more than five or six days. The returned notes, averaging, as we have stated, about fifty thousand a day, and representing, one day with another, about one million pounds in value, are brought into what is known as the Accountant's Sorting Office. Here they are examined by inspectors, who reject any which may be found to be counterfeit. In such a case, the paying-in bank is debited with the amount. The notes come in from various banks in parcels, each parcel accompanied by a memorandum stating the number and amount of the notes contained in it. This memorandum is marked with a certain number, and then each note in the parcel is stamped to correspond, the stamping-machine automatically registering how many are stamped, and consequently drawing immediate attention to any deficiency in the number of notes as compared with that stated in the memorandum. This done, the notes are sorted according to number and date, and after being defaced by punching out the letters indicating value, and tearing off the corner bearing the signature, are passed on to the 'Bank-note Library,' where they are packed in boxes, and preserved for possible future reference during a period of five years. There are one hundred and twenty clerks employed in this one department; and so perfect is the system of registration, that if the number of a returned note be known, the head of this department, by referring to his books, can ascertain in a few minutes the date when and the banker through whom it was presented; and if within the period of five years, can produce the note itself for inspection. As to the 'number' of a Bank-note, by the way, there is sometimes a little misconception, many people imagining that by quoting the bare figures on the face of a note they have done all that is requisite for its identification. This is not the case. Bank-notes are not numbered consecutively *ad infinitum*, but in series of one to one hundred thousand, the different series being distinguished as between themselves by the date, which appears in full in the body of the note, and is further indicated, to the initiated, by the letter and numerals prefixed to the actual number. Thus $\frac{26}{O}$ 90758 on the face of a note indicates that the note in question is No. 90758 of the series printed on May 21, 1883, which date appears in full in the body of the note. $\frac{69}{N}$ in like manner indicates that the note forms part of a series printed on February 19, 1883. In 'taking the number' of a note, therefore, either this prefix or the full date, as stated in the body of the note, should always be included.

The 'Library' of cancelled notes—not to be

confounded with the Bank Library proper—is situated in the Bank vaults, and we are indebted to the courtesy of the Bank-note Librarian for the following curious and interesting statistics respecting his stock. The stock of paid notes for five years—the period during which, as before stated, the notes are preserved for reference—is about seventy-seven million seven hundred and forty-five thousand in number. They fill thirteen thousand four hundred boxes, about eighteen inches long, ten wide, and nine deep. If the notes could be placed in a pile one upon another, they would reach to a height of five and two-third miles. Joined end to end they would form a ribbon twelve thousand four hundred and fifty-five miles long, or half-way round the globe; if laid so as to form a carpet, they would very nearly cover Hyde Park. Their original value is somewhat over seventeen hundred and fifty millions, and their weight is about ninety-one tons. The immense extent of space necessary to accommodate such a mass in the Bank vaults may be imagined. The place, with its piles on piles of boxes reaching far away into dim distance, looks like some gigantic wine-cellar or bonded warehouse.

As each day adds, as we have seen, about fifty thousand notes to the number, it is necessary to find some means of destroying those which have passed their allotted term of preservation. This is done by fire, about four hundred thousand notes being burnt at one time in a furnace specially constructed for that purpose. Formerly, from some peculiarity in the ink with which the notes were printed, the cremated notes burnt into a solid blue clinker; but the composition of the ink has been altered, and the paper now burns to a fine gray ash. The fumes of the burning paper are extremely dense and pungent; and to prevent any nuisance arising from this cause, the process of cremation is carried out at dead of night, when the city is comparatively deserted. Further, in order to mitigate the density of the fumes, they are made to ascend through a shower of falling water, the chimney shaft being fitted with a special shower-bath arrangement for this purpose.

Passing away from the necropolis of dead and buried notes, we visit the Treasury, whence they originally issued. This is a quiet-looking room, scarcely more imposing in appearance than the butler's pantry in a West-end mansion, but the modest-looking cupboards with which its walls are lined are gorged with hidden treasure. The possible value of the contents of this room may be imagined from the fact that a million of money, in notes of one thousand pounds, forms a packet only three inches thick. The writer has had the privilege of holding such a parcel in his hand, and for a quarter of a minute imagining himself a millionaire—with an income of over thirty thousand per annum for life! The same amount might occupy even less space than the above, for Mr Francis tells a story of a lost note for thirty thousand pounds, which, turning up after the lapse of many years, was paid by the Bank *twice over*! We are informed that notes of even a higher value than this have on occasion been printed, but the highest denomination now issued is one thousand pounds.

In this department is kept a portion of the

Bank's stock of golden coin, in bags of one thousand pounds each. This amount does not require a very large bag for its accommodation, but its weight is considerable, amounting to two hundred and fifty-eight ounces twenty pennyweights, so that a million in gold would weigh some tons. In another room of this department—the Weighing Office—are seen the machines for detecting light coin. These machines are marvels of ingenious mechanism. Three or four hundred sovereigns are laid in a long brass scoop or semi-tube, of such a diameter as to admit them comfortably, and self-regulating to such an incline that the coins gradually slide down by their own weight on to one plate of a little balance placed at its lower extremity. Across the face of this plate two little bolts make alternate thrusts, one to the right, one to the left, but at slightly different levels. If the coin be of full weight, the balance is held in equipoise, and the right-hand bolt making its thrust, pushes it off the plate and down an adjacent tube into the receptacle for full-weight coin. If, on the other hand, the coin is ever so little 'light,' the balance naturally rises with it. The right-hand bolt makes its thrust as before, but this time passes harmlessly *beneath* the coin. Then comes the thrust of the left-hand bolt, which, as we have said, is fixed at a fractionally higher level, and pushes the coin down a tube on the opposite side, through which it falls into the light-coin receptacle. The coins thus condemned are afterwards dropped into another machine, which defaces them by a cut half-way across their diameter, at the rate of two hundred a minute. The weighing-machines, of which there are sixteen, are actuated by a small atmospheric engine in one corner of the room, the only manual assistance required being to keep them supplied with coins. It is said that sixty thousand sovereigns and half-sovereigns can be weighed here in a single day. The weighing-machine in question is the invention of Mr Cotton, a former governor of the Bank, and among scientific men is regarded as one of the most striking achievements of practical mechanics.

In the Bullion department we find another weighing-machine of a different character, but in its way equally remarkable. It is the first of its kind, having been designed specially for the Bank by Mr James Murdoch Napier, by whom it has been patented. It is used for the purpose of weighing bullion, which is purchased in this department. Gold is brought in in bars of about eight inches long, three wide, and one inch thick. A bar of gold of these dimensions will weigh about two hundred ounces, and is worth, if pure, about eight hundred pounds. Each bar when brought in is accompanied by a memorandum of its weight. The question of quality is determined by the process of assaying; the weight is checked by means of the weighing-machine we have referred to. This takes the form of an extremely massive pair of scales, working on a beam of immense strength and solidity, and is based, so as to be absolutely rigid, on a solid bed of concrete. The whole stands about six feet high by three wide, and is inclosed in an air-tight plate-glass case, a sash in which is raised when it is desired to

use the machine. The two sides of the scale are each kept permanently loaded, the one with a single weight of three hundred and sixty ounces, the other with a number of weights of various sizes to the same amount. When it is desired to test the weight of a bar of gold, weights to the amount stated in the corresponding memorandum, *less half an ounce*, are removed from the latter scale, and the bar of gold substituted in their place. Up to this point the beam of the scale is kept perfectly horizontal, being maintained in that position by a mechanical break; but now a stud is pressed, and by means of delicate machinery, actuated by water-power, the beam is released. If the weight of the bar has been correctly stated in the memorandum, the scale which holds it should be exactly half an ounce in excess. This or any less excess of weight over the three hundred and sixty ounces in the opposite scale is instantly registered by the machine, a pointer travelling round a dial until it indicates the proper amount. The function of the machine, however, is limited to weighing half an ounce only. If the discrepancy between the two scales as loaded is greater than this, or if on the other hand the bar of gold is more than half an ounce less than the amount stated in the memorandum, an electric bell rings by way of warning, the pointer travels right round the dial, and returns to zero. So delicate is the adjustment, that the weight of half a penny postage stamp—somewhat less than half a grain—will set the hand in motion and be recorded on the dial.

The stock of gold in the bullion vault varies from one to three million pounds sterling. The bars are laid side by side on small flat trucks or barrows carrying one hundred bars each. In a glass case in this vault is seen a portion of the war indemnity paid by King Coffee of Ashantee, consisting of gold ornaments, a little short of standard fineness.

One of the first reflections that strike an outsider permitted to inspect the repository of so much treasure is, 'Can all this wealth be safe?' These heaps of precious metal, these piles of still more precious notes, are handled by the officials in such an easy-going, matter-of-course way, that one would almost fancy a few thousands would scarcely be missed; and that a dishonest person had only to walk in and help himself to as many sovereigns or hundred pound notes as his pockets could accommodate. Such, however, is very far from being the case. The safeguards against robbery, either by force or fraud, are many and elaborate. At night the Bank is guarded at all accessible points by an ample military force, which would no doubt give a good account of any intruder rash enough to attempt to gain an entrance. In the event of attack from without, there are sliding galleries which can be thrust out from the roof, and which would enable a body of sharpshooters to rake the streets in all directions.

Few people are aware that the Bank of England contains within its walls a graveyard, but such is nevertheless the fact. The Gordon riots in 1780, during which the Bank was attacked by a mob, called attention to the necessity for strengthening its defences. Competent authorities advised that an adjoining church, rejoicing in the appropriate

name of St Christopher-le-Stocks, was in a military sense a source of danger, and accordingly an Act of Parliament was passed to enable the directors to purchase the church and its appurtenances. The old churchyard, tastefully laid out, now forms what is known as the Bank 'garden,' the handsome 'Court Room' or 'Bank Parlour' abutting on one of its sides. There is a magnificent lime-tree, one of the largest in London, in the centre of the garden, and tradition states that under this tree a former clerk of the Bank, *eight feet high*, lies buried. With this last, though not least of the curiosities of the Bank, we must bring the present article to a close. We had intended briefly to have referred to sundry eventful pages of its history; but these we are compelled, by considerations of space, to reserve for a future paper.

BY MEAD AND STREAM.

CHAPTER LVII.—THE SECRET IN THE OAK PARLOUR.

AT Willowmere, the rapidity with which Mr Hadleigh regained strength astounded Dr Joy, and delighted the patient's nurses, Aunt Hussy and Madge.

'Wonderful nerve, wonderful physique he must have,' whispered Dr Joy admiringly on the fifth day; 'and yet, according to all accounts, he did not study the economy of either in the course of his life. Well, well; we do come across extraordinary constitutions occasionally, and his is one of them.'

The peculiarity of the case was that, after the first shock, the patient was perfectly calm, and showed not the remotest symptom of delirium. He understood everything that passed around him, and when permitted, talked quietly about the fire, and listened attentively to all that was related to him regarding it.

He heard with pleased surprise the account of how Caleb had rescued him, and said to Madge: 'I must do something for that man; but it will have to be by your hand, for he is evidently resolved to accept nothing from mine.'

'We will have to find out where he is, before we can do anything for him. He intended to go to Australia; but the day after he regained his freedom, he wrote to Philip saying that he had altered his mind, and was going to the United States.'

'Why did not Philip keep him here?'

'He tried to persuade him to remain, but could not. Poor Caleb, he does not know what a sorry heart he has left behind him.' Here she checked herself, feeling that she was entering upon delicate ground. 'He sent good wishes to you, and to all of us, and promised to write again to Philip, so that we may have an opportunity of serving him yet.'

'He is a headstrong fellow,' said Mr Hadleigh; 'and I hope he may not ruin his own prospects by his too great eagerness to secure the independence of his neighbours. You see, Miss Heathcote, he is one of those unhappy people who have reached the stage of education in which they discover that they have certain rights, without having got education enough to recognise the

responsibilities which these rights entail. Well, we must wait till we have news of him. . . . Has my safe been dug out of the ruins yet?'

That was a question he had been asking daily from the moment when he comprehended the disaster which had befallen him; and the answer had been hitherto always the same: 'Not yet.' At length came the information that the safe had been found, and was apparently little damaged by its ordeal of fire.

Then Mr Hadleigh bade Philip take his keys and bring him from the safe a little deed-box marked '*L. H. Private*.' When Philip returned with the box, his father had been moved into the Oak Parlour, where he was reclining in a big armchair, supported by down cushions. A cheery fire with one of Madge's oak-logs was blazing on the hearth, raising the temperature of the apartment to summer heat.

When the box was placed on the table beside him, he desired to be left alone until he should ring a hand-bell which was within his reach. He had caused Philip to place the key in the box, and for a space he remained motionless, staring at it, as if hesitating to touch again the spring of emotions which he had intended should be there shut up from him for ever. His eyelids drooped, and in spite of the bright glow of the fire, a shadow fell on his pale face.

'Yes, I thank God that I am spared to do this thing,' he muttered at length. 'Let the secret die with me—it was a cruel as well as a selfish wish that prompted me to reveal it to them. What matter to me how they may hold me in their memory? They may think of me as that which circumstances made me appear, not as what I wished to be. What matter? The dead are beyond earthly pain and passion. I shall not stretch my hand from the grave to cast the least shade of regret over their lives.'

He slowly took from the box the two packets he had so carefully sealed and put away on the night of the fire. The one was addressed to Madge as Mrs Philip Hadleigh; the other, to his son Philip, with the injunction that he, after reading, was to decide whether or not to show it to his wife. The paper addressed to Madge, he took up and held in the long thin scarred hands as if it were a thing capable of feeling. He broke the seal and took the paper from the envelope, performing the operation mechanically, whilst the far-away look was in his eyes, and the Something he had sought but could not reach was fading from his vision altogether. His was the kind of expression with which one who knows he is doomed watches the last sunset displaying its brief, changing glories on the horizon. The broad streams of gleaming amber and opal are quietly transfused into the pensive gray of twilight, and the darkness follows.

'They must never know.'

He made a movement as if to drop the paper into the fire, paused, and his eyes rested on the writing, although they did not distinguish the words. And there was no need; for they only represented in a feeble way thoughts which were always present to his mind.

'I must speak'—such were the written words—'or I shall lose all self-restraint. You cannot be harmed by what is put down here. Perhaps

you will never see it; you certainly shall not until after my funeral, and then you may be able to understand and think none the less kindly of me for this confession.

'You have seen me in my darkest moods, and you have wondered at my melancholy—wondered why I who had been granted such a large measure of what the world esteems prosperity should find no contentment in it. I have partly explained the cause to Philip: I could not explain it to you.

'With bitter reason I early learned to believe that money—mere money—was the source of all earthly happiness. I was mistaken, and found out my mistake too late. I should have been content, perhaps happy in a way, if I could have gone on to the end without the knowledge that the want of Love is the only real sorrow which can enter into man or woman's life. But there was nobody to lead me out of the miserable conviction which took possession of my mind as I watched those dearest to me fall one by one, not with the merciful swiftness of soldiers in battle, but in the lingering torments of soul and body which come to those who are poor.

'Left alone, I looked around. The whole world was my enemy, to be conquered by force and stratagem. Any man may be rich, I said, who has a clear head and no conscience; who is willing to abandon all sentiment, forego all trivial pleasures, and give himself absolutely to the service of the world's idol. I gave myself to the idol; and wealth came to me in increasing stores year by year, month by month, day by day.

'At first, the sense of my victory sufficed; but soon there came the consciousness that this was not happiness; it was the successful working of a machine. I craved for something more, but did not know what it was. My wife's affection, I knew, belonged to another: I had married her with that knowledge. I tried to win the friendship of my children; but the girls had learned to regard me with a kind of fear, Countess with indifference, and Philip was the only one who could speak to me with frankness. His generous nature comforted me, but did not fill up the void in my life.

'I was still seeking the Something which was necessary to me, and at length I found it in You. . . . Yes, you taught me what love was—I loved you with all the fervour of youth. My years, my experience of the world intensified the love which I had never known before. I was prepared to sacrifice all my possessions, all my hopes, for you.

'Do not start away and cast the paper from you; I have made the sacrifice.

'At the same moment in which the treasure that would have made life beautiful was revealed to me, there was also revealed the impossibility of its ever becoming mine. I was like a seaman who is shipwrecked and sinks within sight of land. I will not try to tell you through what pain I passed to the recognition of the duty Love imposed—to help forward your happiness in any direction in which you might think it lay. I will not try to tell you with what agitation I learned for the first time, what must have become known to me long before, had it not been for the morbid isolation in which my days were passed, that you and Philip were betrothed.

'My first desire then was to bring about your union as speedily as possible, believing that I should find my peace in having the privilege of calling you daughter. Meeting your uncle Crawshay in the market-place, I took him to a private apartment in the inn and endeavoured to explain my wishes. I must have spoken stupidly, for he misunderstood me, and fancied that the proposal was on my own account. His misconception startled and confused me, and he left me in great indignation.

'I thought of following him to Willowmere and explaining; but the effort already made had tried me so much, that not feeling sure of what awkwardness of speech or what irrepressible sign of emotion might betray my secret, I determined to let matters take their course, whilst my task should be to keep Philip at home and to hasten the marriage. You know how earnestly I strove to carry out that resolution.

'You and Philip will be happy. You two have found in time the golden key of life, and in your happiness I shall find mine at last. I want to live till then; and, after, I shall pass away content.'

The invalid seemed to arouse from a sad and yet pleasing dream, for there was a faint smile on his worn face, and the eyes seemed to brighten as with the consciousness of victory—that greatest of all victories, the conquest of self.

He rang the hand-bell, and Madge herself promptly answered the summons.

'It is you I wanted, my child. . . . How good and patient you have been with me—Madge. Take notice, I am to call you henceforth, Madge, my child.'

'And I shall call you father,' she said tenderly, taking one of his hands and stroking it affectionately.

He was silent for a few moments; then lifting his head, he drew her towards him and kissed her with strange solemnity on the brow.

'Yes, my child,' he said calmly, 'that is the name which commands a portion of your love—and you will give me a little of it?'

'A great deal of it—you may be sure of that,' she answered, blushing slightly, and thinking how could she do otherwise than give a great deal of love to Philip's father.

'You give me more comfort than you know, my dear daughter. Now take this paper and place it on the fire, so that I may see it burn to ashes.'

She obeyed unquestioningly; and he watched the flame stretching its white fingers round the secret which was to die with him; saw the paper curl into black and white films; and then he drew a long breath of relief.

'They can never know now,' was his mental exclamation. 'Thank God it is done, and by her hand.'

There was a little while of dreamy silence, during which Madge stood by his side, holding his hand, and anxiously noting every change on his countenance. The changes were rapid and curious as those of a kaleidoscope: now there was pain; again a stern frown, as if checking some rebellious spirit, and anon a serene smile of resignation and content. With this latter expression he looked up to her.

'Call Philip.'

The son was immediately in attendance.

'I hope you are not exerting yourself too much, sir,' was his anxious observation.

'O no; I am wonderfully strong this afternoon, and am taking advantage of the renewed strength to put some matters straight, which being done, will relieve my mind, and so give me the better chance of a speedy recovery. But it is as well to be prepared for the worst; and therefore I wish to have the satisfaction of handing you this packet in Madge's presence. You will learn from it that when I took from you the portion of my fortune which would have been yours in the ordinary course of events, I gave it to your future wife. I did not intend you to know this until after my death; but as your uncle has come to grief, I am desirous of relieving your mind as soon as possible from any fear of the future; and I should have been glad to have helped Austin Shield out of his difficulties, for your mother's sake—but he would refuse any help that came from me.—What is that?'

The exclamation was caused by one of the oak panels facing him slowly moving aside and revealing the form of a man.

MORE USES OF PAPER.

THE place of timber in construction bids fair to be taken by papier-mâché, and it may claim to rival iron itself in the multiplicity of its industrial applications. Besides the advantage of its cheap construction, papier-mâché is not affected by changes of temperature, does not crack, like wood or plaster, and is never discoloured by rust. It can be bronzed, painted, polished, or gilded, made heavy or light as required, and possesses greater adaptability for quick removal or adjustment than most other materials. Its uses in architecture seem to have no limit, as has been shown by building and completely furnishing a dwelling-house entirely of this material. According to report, a huge hotel is about to be constructed in America in which paper will take the place of stone and brick. The fourth paper dome in the United States and, it is thought, in the world, will crown the new Observatory at Columbia College, in New York. A trade journal remarks that besides the paper dome at the Troy Polytechnic, there is a second at West Point, and a third at Beloit College. That at West Point is said to be the largest, but that at Columbia College the best in construction and arrangement. The method used in the manufacture of the paper is kept a secret, the makers using a patented process. The dome is made in sections—twenty-four in number. They are bent over towards the inside at the edges and bolted to ribs of wood. The shell, though very thin, is as stiff as sheet-iron. On one side of the dome is the oblong opening for the telescope, and over this a shutter, also of paper, but stiffened with wood-lining, which slides around on the outside of the dome. The whole dome is so light that the hand can turn it.

As regards the uses of papier-mâché in Europe, we hear of a complete church being built in Bavaria, having columns, walls, altar, roof, and spire all of this material. Some of the most tasteful halls on the continent and in this country

are finished in it in preference to wood. Mantels, mirrors, frames, and gilded chandeliers are of its composition. Pedestals, newels, vases, furniture, and ornaments of all kinds, no less than floors and staircases, gas-pipes, and even chimney-shafts, can be made of it. In Breslau, a chimney-shaft fifty feet high is said to have been made of paper-pulp chemically impregnated so as to resist combustion.

Incombustible as well as water-proof paper is now no novelty, and has before been alluded to in this *Journal*; but an account of some further experiments in this line has since reached us. M. G. Meyer of Paris recently exhibited to the 'Société d'Encouragement pour l'Industrie nationale' specimens of an incombustible paper capable of taking on inks of various shades, and also paintings, and preserving them even in the fire of a gas-flame. It was stated by him that the papers and documents shown had been for four hours in a pottery furnace, and had displayed undoubted fire-resisting properties. Paper of this indestructible nature should be in good demand for wills, deeds, and account-books, &c. It is also suitable for wall-covering, and ought, we should think, to be of great value for theatrical decorations and scenery. The latter can be rendered unflammable by using this inventor's material as well as his incombustible colours. While on the subject of decoration may be mentioned the new kind of satin paper recently brought out for this purpose. It is made by covering common paper with adhesive size, and sprinkling dyed asbestos powder on its moist surface. Asbestos readily takes up all colours, especially those of aniline, so that some very rich effects can be produced.

Paper curtains, counterpanes, sheets, and so forth, are said to have been among the objects of interest at the Sydney Exhibition; and so there is no reason to doubt the report that table-napkins of the same adaptable substance are regularly supplied at the cheap dining-rooms of Berlin. The napkins are of tissue-paper with a coloured ornamental border—not only because paper is cheaper than diaper, but as a protection against pilfering. Indeed, so common are paper table-napkins said to be at Berlin, that the manufacturers advertise them regularly in the newspapers at the rate of about nine or ten a penny.

When we think of the extraordinary uses to which paper is applied, it is not so startling to learn that this material may even enter into the composition of our post-prandial cigar. If we are to believe the newspapers, millions of cigars are annually manufactured in Havana without so much as a single fibre of tobacco-leaf being utilised in the process of their fabrication. The great straw-paper factory in New York State has for some time been making a peculiar sort of extremely thin fine paper, which it has been discovered is used for making cigars. This we are told is thoroughly soaked in a solution composed of tobacco refuse boiled in water, then dried and pressed between stamps, which impart to it the appearance of the finest leaf so exactly as to defy detection even on the part of the experienced in such matters. Of these paper-leaves are fabricated the spurious cigars alluded to, which are exported from Cuba to all parts of the world as genuine tobacco. The cost of their production

is nothing in comparison with the prices at which they are disposed of. A slight difference in weight between the genuine and the spurious cigar of identical brand and size, affords, it is stated, the only certain means of detecting this fraud, so alike in appearance are the weeds of real tobacco and their counterfeit presentments in straw-paper.

As delicate sheets of paper can be made to serve for steel or iron, it is easily understood that school-slates can be manufactured from similar apparently unpromising beginnings. They are made of white cardboard, covered with a film formed by the action of sulphuric acid on tissue-paper. This covering, according to an American journal, is probably a modification of celluloid. The slates can be used with a lead-pencil or with ink; and to remove the marks, the slate is washed with cold water. A special ink is also prepared for use with these white slates. Another form of slate is made by coating the white cardboard with water-glass. It may be used with lead-pencils or coloured crayons. When the surface becomes soiled, the water-glass may be rubbed off with sand-paper, and a new film may be put on with a sponge or brush dipped in water-glass.

To the number of paper-making materials now in use must be added an old weed of the nettle species, not of the stinging kind. From the bark of certain shrubs, also, several kinds of Japanese paper are made. The strongest and commonest is made from the bark of the mitsuma. A paper of superior quality is likewise made from the koku, a small tree of the mulberry family, imported from China. The inner bark of both shrubs is washed and dried, softened in steam and boiling water, and afterwards beaten with staves until a fine paste is formed. This paste mixed with water is then made into paper in the ordinary way.

A new use of cedar-bark has been undertaken at New Bedford, Massachusetts. The Acushnet paper-mill at that point is, it appears, nearly completed, and was built for the express purpose of manufacturing pulp and paper from cedar-bark. This, we are told, is the first enterprise of the kind ever undertaken. The bark is taken from shingle butts that are sixteen inches long, and are bundled for shipment like laths. The new mill will work up three cords of bark a day. The first product will be for carpet linings; but the paper is said to be equally adapted to other purposes.

A new method of preparing soluble wool from tissues in which wool and cotton are combined has been discovered. When subjected to a current of superheated steam under a pressure of five atmospheres, the wool melts and falls to the bottom of the pan, leaving the cotton, linen, and other vegetable fibres clean and in a condition suitable for paper-making. The melted wool is afterwards evaporated to dryness, when it becomes completely soluble in water. The increased value of the rags is said to be sufficient to cover the whole cost of the operation.

With the use of the papyrus, as is well known, the Egyptians were early acquainted, and its manufacture was a government monopoly, as paper-making is to this day at Boulak, the river-port of Cairo. The remarkable aptitude for paper-making displayed by the Boulak Arabs is an

hereditary accomplishment. The Daira paper manufactory in the suburb of Boulak regularly employed, we are told, more than two hundred hands before the late war, almost all natives. Most of the paper turned out is for packing purposes; but thousands of reams of good writing and printing paper are also manufactured. The writing-paper is made specially for Arabic writing; and what is produced in excess of the requirements of the country is exported eastward, partly to Arabia, and a small portion even to India. Though linen and cotton rags are used in this factory, the interior of the stalk of the sugar-cane furnishes an endless supply of paper-making material. In the production of what is called 'straw' paper in Europe, the *hilfa* grass plays a very important part. The Daira factory at Boulak enjoys a monopoly of this industry in Egypt; and in connection with it is the National Printing Office, also under the control of the same administration.

In conclusion, some reference may be made to a published work entitled *The Paper Mill Directory of the World*, which will appear annually. It contains a complete catalogue of all the paper and pulp mills on the globe. The total number of mills existing is four thousand four hundred and sixty-three. The German Empire, with over eleven hundred, heads the list in point of numbers, the United States following very closely. Then we have France with considerably more than five hundred, Austro-Hungary, England, Italy, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Canada and Norway, the remainder being scattered over various parts of the world. It appears that the mills in the United States are capable of turning out seven million some odd hundred thousand pounds-weight, in round numbers, of pulp and paper daily. Over a million pounds is produced in Massachusetts alone.

ONE WOMAN'S HISTORY.

CHAPTER VIII.

At the very time Mr Dulcimer was assisting Miss Wynter across the stepping-stones, the stranger whose unexpected appearance the previous night had so startled Madame De Vigne was pacing leisurely up the valley in the direction of the waterfall.

When, on inquiring for Madame De Vigne at the hotel that morning, he was told that she had gone out for the day with a picnic party, his suspicious nature at once took the alarm. Might she not by some means have discovered his presence in the hotel? he asked himself; and might not this story of the picnic be nothing more than a subterfuge, by means of which she would obtain a start of several hours in her efforts to escape from him? He at once ordered a fly and set off in pursuit. On reaching the place where the wagonettes had been left, he found that if he persisted in his search for Madame De Vigne, he would be compelled to do the rest of the distance on foot. He disliked walking, but in this case there was no help for it; accordingly, he set out on his way to the glen with such grace as there might be in him.

He was a man to all appearance about forty

years of age—he might be a little older; but his figure was still as lithe and active as that of many a man of twenty. He had jet-black hair, and his closely cropped beard and moustache were of the same hue. He had large, white, carnivorous-looking teeth, and small black eyes as piercing as gimlets, with now and then a strange, furtively suspicious look glancing at you out of their corners. His features were aquiline, rather finely cut, and his complexion sallow. By the majority of people he would have been accounted a fairly handsome man. He was fashionably dressed, but it was after the fashion of a Parisian dandy, not that of a London swell; and there is a vast difference in the styles of the two.

When he had passed through the wicket which gave admittance to the glen and was within a few yards of the bridge, he paused and gazed around. Not a creature was to be seen, for, before this, Dick and Bella had gone on a further journey of exploration and were no longer visible.

'So! This must be the place where they told me that I should find her,' said the stranger to himself in French. 'But she is not here. Well, I can wait.' He advanced a few yards farther up the glen. 'We could not have a better place for our meeting. There will be no one to overhear what we shall have to say to each other. Ah, *ma chère* Mora, what a surprise for you! How enchanted you will be to find that your brave Hector is not dead, as they wrote and told you he was, but alive, and burning to embrace you! What happiness for both of us!'

He had been climbing slowly up the ravine, and by this time he had reached the spot where Mora had been sitting but a short time before. Her sketch-book attracted his eye; he took it up and opened it.

'Hers! Here is her name. She cannot be far away. A man's head—a likeness evidently. The same again—and yet again. I must find out the name of this monsieur. I shall have much pleasure to introduce myself to him.' A slight noise startled him. He shut the book and raised his eyes. 'Ah! here comes my angel,' he exclaimed. '*Sacre bleu!* she is handsomer than ever.'

For the moment Mora did not perceive him. When she did, she put a hand quickly to her heart and gave a great gasp.

'Ah! What a volume of meaning that little word conveyed!

Monsieur De Miravel—for such was the name he now chose to be known by—advanced a step or two smilingly, and bowed with all a Frenchman's grace. '*Me voici!*' he said. 'Hector—thy husband—not dead, but alive and—'

She stopped him with an imperious gesture. 'Wretch—coward—felon!' she exclaimed, and her voice seemed to express the concentrated passion and hatred of years. 'I could never quite believe that I had been fortunate enough to lose you for ever. I had a presentiment that I should some day see you again. Why have you followed me? But I need not ask. It is to rob me again, as you robbed me before. *Voleur!*'

She stood before him drawn up to the full height of her magnificent beauty, her bosom heaving, her eyes dilating, her head thrown slightly back, her clenched hands hanging by her sides, her shoulders a little raised. Even

the scoundrel whom she had addressed could not help admiring her as she towered before him in all the splendour of her passion.

A small red spot flamed on either cheek, but his voice had still a smile in it when next he spoke. 'Ah ha!' he said. 'You are still the same charming Mora that you always were! You still call me by the same pretty names! How it brings back the days of long ago!'

'How much money do you want of me?' she demanded abruptly. 'What price do you expect me to pay that I may rid myself of your presence?'

'Softly, *ma chère*, softly. I have not been at all this great trouble and expense to discover you, without having something to say to you. I want to talk what you English call business.'

'Name your price and leave me.'

'Taisez-vous, je vous prie. You are here, and you must listen to me. You cannot help yourself.'

Madame De Vigne bit her lip, but did not reply.

De Miravel sat down, crossed his legs, leant back a little, and looked up at her with half-shut eyes. 'Five years ago,' he began, 'you received a certain letter in which you were informed that I was dead. That letter, by some strange error, was forwarded to the wrong person. It was not I, your husband, who was dead, but another man of the same name—another Hector Laroche. When the mistake was discovered, you had left the place where you had previously been living, and no one knew what had become of you. Two years ago I found myself in Paris again. When I had arranged my private affairs, which had suffered during my long absence, I began to make inquiries concerning the wife from whom I had been so cruelly torn, and whom my heart was bleeding to embrace.'

'*Menteur!*' ground out Mora between her teeth.

He waved, as it were, the epithet aside with an airy gesture of his hand, and continued: 'For a long time I could hear nothing concerning her, and I began to fear that I had lost her for ever. But at length a clue was put into my hands. I discovered that, in consequence of the death of a relative, my incomparable wife had come into a fortune of twelve thousand francs a year—that she had changed her name from Madame Laroche to that of her aunt, Madame De Vigne, and that she and her sister had gone to make their home in England. Naturally, I follow my wife to England, and here, to-day, *me voici!*'

'Your price—name your price,' was all that the lady deigned to answer.

'Pardon. I am not in want of money—at present. It was my wife whom I sought everywhere, and now that I have found her, I do not intend ever to leave her again.'

'Liar and villain!'

'Doucement, je vous prie. Listen! I am no longer so young as I once was. I have travelled—I have seen the world—I am *blasé*. I want a home—I want what you English call my own fireside. Where, then, should be my home—where should be my fireside, but with my wife—the wife from whom I have been torn for so many cruel years, but whom, *parole d'honneur*, I have never ceased to love and cherish in my heart!'

'Oh! this is too much,' murmured Mora under her breath, the fingers of one hand gripping those of the other like a vice. The tension was becoming greater than she could bear.

'But there need be no scandal, no *éclaircissement* among my dear wife's English friends,' went on De Miravel with the same hard, set smile. 'I have thought of all that. Madame Laroche is dead—Hector Laroche is dead. In their place we have here, Madame De Vigne, a charming widow; and Monsieur De Miravel, a bachelor not too antique to marry. Monsieur De Miravel has known and admired Madame De Vigne before her marriage to her late husband. What more natural than that he should admire her still, that he should make her an offer of his hand, and that she should accept it? So one day Madame De Vigne and Monsieur De Miravel are quietly married, and, *pouf!* all the respectable English friends have dust thrown in their eyes!'

For a moment or two Mora stared at him in silence; then she said in a low voice: 'And you propose this to me—to me!'

'Sérieusement, ma chère—sérieusement. It is a beautiful little scheme.'

'If you will not take your price and leave me, I at least can leave you,' she answered in low, determined tones. 'No power on earth can compel me to live with you for a single hour as your wife, and no power shall. I would sooner drop dead at your feet.'

The Frenchman bent his head and sniffed at the flower in his button-hole. When he lifted his face again there was a strange expression in his eyes, which his unhappy wife remembered only too well, and caused her to shudder in spite of herself. She felt that the scorpion's sting of what he had to say to her was yet to come. When he next spoke, there was the same cold, cruel glitter in his eyes that travellers tell us is to be seen in the eyes of a cobra at the moment it is about to strike.

'Mademoiselle your sister—what a beautiful young lady she is!' he said, speaking even more softly than he had done before, and balancing his cane on a couple of fingers as he spoke. 'I saw her this morning for the first time. She is to be married in a little while to the son of a rich English *milord*. Is it not so? *Eh bien!* I wonder what this rich *milord*, this Sir William, would say, and what the young gentleman, his son, would say, if they were told that the sister of the charming Mademoiselle Clarice was the wife of a *déporté*—of Hector Laroche, a man who had worked out a sentence of penal servitude at Noumea. Of course the rich Sir William would at once take Monsieur Laroche to lunch with him at his club, and the young gentleman would present him with a little cheque for five or six thousand francs; and he would be asked to give the bride away at the wedding, and he would sign his name in the register, thus—"Hector Laroche, *ex-déporté*, number 897."

For a moment or two it seemed to Mora as if earth and heaven were coming together.

'So, fiend! miscreant! that is your scheme, is it?'

'I have shown you my cards,' he answered with a shrug. 'I have hidden nothing from you. So now, *chère* Madame De Vigne, you have only

to give your promise to marry your devoted De Miravel; and the moment you do that, Hector Laroche dies and is buried out of sight for ever, and neither Sir William nor his son will know that such a *vaurien* ever existed.'

'Leave me—leave me!' she exclaimed in a hoarse whisper.

He glanced at her keenly. It was evident that just at present she could bear no more. It was not his policy to drive her to extremities. He rose from his seat.

'I will go and promenade myself for a little while,' he said. 'In half an hour I will return.'

He raised his hat as he might have done to a duchess. She stood a little aside, to let him pass, but did not allow her eyes to rest on him for a moment. He turned and took the path which led up the ravine.

Mora sank down wearily on the seat he had vacated. At that moment she felt as if she would have been grateful for the earth to open and swallow her up. She was appalled at the blackness of the gulf to the edge of which her husband had just dragged her. What should she do? Whither should she turn? To whom should she look for help? Alas! in all the wide world there was no one who could help her—least of all the man whose strong protecting love had seemed but yesterday as though it were able to shield her from every harm.

'I am in the coils of a Python that will slowly but surely strangle me,' she said. 'Yes—death alone can release me. And only yesterday I was so happy! If I could but have died at the moment Harold pressed his lips to mine! Why does he not come? I must tell him everything—everything. And after that?' She shuddered, and rose to her feet. 'And he loves me so much!' she said with a heart-broken sigh. 'Poor Harold! Poor Harold!'

Scarcely conscious of what she was doing, she turned and took the same path that she had taken before when she went to watch for Colonel Woodruffe's coming up the valley. Her one burning desire now was to see him; beyond that, her mind at present refused to go.

'I am afraid that as an ambassador the colonel was a failure.'

The speaker was Mr Etheridge, and it was to Clarice Loraine that his remark was addressed.

Mr Etheridge had had pointed out to him and had duly admired the view so much extolled by the young girl, and the two were now slowly sauntering back to their starting-point. By this time Clarice felt herself quite at ease with her companion, so much so, indeed, that in her prettily confidential way she had told him all about how Archie and she became acquainted, how they grew to love each other, how Archie proposed and was accepted, and how surprised they all were afterwards to find that he was a baronet's son. Then she went on to tell him of Archie's letter to his father, the first result of which was Colonel Woodruffe's visit at the vicarage.

'Well, and what happened after the colonel's visit?' continued Mr Etheridge.

'Archie wrote again, twice; but there came no answer till yesterday, when he received the telegram which summoned him to meet his father in London.'

'Supposing Sir William should refuse his consent, what would the result be in that case?'

'That is more than I can tell,' she answered with a little trembling of her lips. 'But before Archie left us, my sister told him that he went away a free man—that if his father were opposed to the marriage, we should look upon his promise as if it had never been given; and that if we never saw him again, we should know the reason why, and never blame him in our thoughts.'

'And you agreed with what your sister said?'

'With every word of it.'

'That was very brave of you. But what had Mr Archie to say to such an arrangement?'

'He laughed it to scorn. He said he would do all that lay in his power to win his father's consent, but that—that—'

'In any case, he would hold you to your promise, and come back and claim you for his wife? Mr Archie would find himself a very poor man if Sir William were to cut off his allowance.'

'That is a prospect which does not seem to frighten him in the least.'

'But doubtless it would not be without its effect upon you, Miss Loraine. You would hardly care to tie yourself for life to a pauper.'

'O Mr Etheridge, what a strange opinion you must have formed of me! I would marry Archie if he had not a sovereign to call his own.'

'The charming imprudence of a girl in love. Then you would marry him in opposition to his father's wishes?'

'Now you ask me a question that I cannot answer. That, and that only, would cause me to hesitate.'

'Why should the wishes of a selfish valetudinarian—of a man whom you have never seen—cause you to hesitate, or be allowed to come between you and the happiness of your life?'

'Ah! but could I ever be really happy with the knowledge for ever in my mind that I had been the cause of separating a father from his son, and that by becoming Archie's wife I had blighted the fairest prospects of his life? And then, perhaps—who can tell?—after a time he might become a little tired of me—men do sometimes tire of their wives, don't they?—and then he might begin to remember and regret all that he had sacrificed in marrying me; and that, I think, would nearly break my heart.'

'The old man laid his hand caressingly on her arm for a moment. 'Well, well, we must hope for the best,' he said. 'We must hope that Sir William will not prove a very flinty-hearted papa.'

She smiled up gratefully in his face. 'Tell me, Mr Etheridge, is Sir William a very terrible person to have to do with?'

He broke into a little laugh. 'Terrible, miss? No; hardly that, I think; but eccentric, if you please. The fact is that Sir William is one of those men of whom it can never be predicated with certainty what view he will take, or what conclusion he will arrive at, with regard to any matter that may be brought before him. He

has an obnoxious habit of thinking and deciding for himself, and is seldom led by the opinions of others. Yes, undoubtedly Sir William is a very eccentric man.'

They had got back to the bridge by this time. 'Why, I declare, yonder comes Colonel Woodruffe!' exclaimed Clarice. 'I am so pleased—and so will Mora be.'

'Evidently the colonel is a favourite,' said Mr Etheridge drily.

'Of course he is. Everybody likes Colonel Woodruffe. But probably you know him already, Mr Etheridge?'

'I have met him occasionally at Sir William's house. I have no doubt he would remember me if you were to mention my name.'

'I will go and speak to him, if you will excuse me for a few moments.'

Clarice sped quickly across the bridge. Mr Etheridge sat down on the parapet and fanned himself with his hat.

The colonel, who had been gazing round him in some perplexity, hurried forward the moment he perceived Miss Loraine.

'Good-morning, Colonel Woodruffe,' said the girl as she held out her hand. 'I am delighted to find that you have discovered us.'

'Your sister told me that you were all to be at High Ghyll to-day, so I have driven round in search of you. But where are the rest of the party?'

'Gone in search of the picturesque, I have no doubt. Mora was here a little while ago; and see'—pointing with her finger—'yonder are her sketch-book and shawl, so that she cannot be far away.'

The colonel had been gazing over Clarice's shoulder at Mr Etheridge. 'Whom have you yonder?' he asked. 'I seem to know his face.'

'Such a dear old gentleman!—Mr Etheridge, Sir William Ridsdale's secretary.'

'Sir William Ridsdale's secretary!' echoed the colonel with an air of stupefaction.

'Yes; he recognised you the moment he saw you. He says that he has met you occasionally at Sir William's house.'

'Oh, indeed! But what has brought him here, may I ask?'

'He has come all the way from Spa with a letter for Archie from his father. But when he reached here this morning, he found that Archie had been telegraphed for last evening to meet his father in London.—It seems very strange, doesn't it? But then, as Mr Etheridge says, Sir William is a very eccentric man.'

'Very eccentric, indeed,' responded the colonel absently.

'So that of course accounts for it.—But yonder comes Mora.'

The colonel turned eagerly. 'Then, with your permission, I will leave you to Mr Etheridge.'

'We shall see you at luncheon, of course?'

'You may rely upon me not to miss that,' answered the colonel with a laugh.

Clarice kissed her hand to her sister, and then went back to Mr Etheridge. She wanted to afford the colonel an opportunity for a *tête-à-tête* with Mora, so she at once proposed another ramble to Mr Etheridge, who assented with alacrity.

The moment Colonel Woodruffe drew near Mora De Vigne, he saw that something was amiss.

She looked an altogether different woman from her whom he had parted from only a few hours before with a tender light of love and happiness in her eyes. His heart misgave him as he walked up to her.

'What has happened?' he asked in anxious tones as he took her hand. 'What has wrought this change in you? Your hand is like ice.'

She gazed up into his face for a moment or two without speaking, with a dumb, pitiful wistfulness in her eyes, that affected him strangely. Then she said: 'Why did you not read the letter which I gave you last evening?'

He gazed at her for a moment. 'You know my reasons for not reading it. But why do you ask that now?'

'Because, if you had read it, you would have saved me from having to tell so much to-day, which, in that case, you would have known yesterday.'

'Pardon me, but you speak in enigmas.'

'You have read of earthquakes, although you may never have felt the shock of one. One minute all is fair, bright, and beautiful; the next, there is nothing but ruin, disaster, and death. Since I saw you yesterday, the foundations of my life, which I thought nothing could ever shake more, have crumbled into utter ruin around me.'

'How can that be, while I am here to guard and cherish you? Yesterday, you gave me your love—your life. What power on earth can tear them from me?'

'Ah me! Listen, and you shall learn.'

She sat for a few moments with bent head, as if scarcely knowing how to begin. The colonel was standing a little way from her, one of his arms twined round the slender stem of a sapling.

'What I am about to tell you is the life-story of a most unhappy woman,' she said, lifting her head and gazing sadly into his eyes. 'My father was an Englishman, who was engaged for many years in business near Paris. I was educated in a convent, as girls are educated in France. I had left the convent about a year, and was keeping my father's house—my mother having died meanwhile, and my sister being away at school—when a certain Monsieur Laroche became a frequent visitor. Before long, my father told me that his affairs were deeply involved. Laroche was the only man who could or would save him, and that only on condition that I became his wife. I was little more than a child in worldly knowledge; I knew that in France the question of a girl's marriage is always settled by her parents; so, although I already detested the man, I yielded to my father's entreaties, and became Madame Laroche. Within a year, my father died—by his own hand.'

'My poor Mora!'

'Whatever wreck of property he left behind, my husband contrived to obtain possession of. But before that time, I knew him to be an inveterate gambler, and worse! Of my life at that time I care not now to speak. Can there be many such men as he in the world—such tigers in human form? I hope not.'

'Some time after, when my life had become a burden almost greater than I could bear, there came news of the death of my godmother, and

that she had left me a legacy of two thousand pounds. The money had not been six hours in my possession, before my husband broke open my bureau and robbed me of the whole of it, together with my own and my mother's jewels. I was left utterly destitute. A few months later came the war, the siege of Paris, and the famine. Oh! that terrible time. I often live it over again in my dreams even now.'

'And you have gone through all this!' said the colonel.

'I had no tidings of my husband till the war was over,' resumed Mora. 'Then came news indeed. He had been detected cheating at cards—there had been a quarrel—the lights had been blown out, and the man who had accused him had been shot through the heart. My husband was tried, found guilty, and condemned to a long term of penal servitude.'

'A happy riddance for you and every one,' remarked the colonel with a shrug.

'I had friends who did not desert me in my extremity. I gave lessons in English, and so contrived to live. One day there came an official notification that my husband was dead. He had died in prison, and had been buried in a convict's grave. Was it wicked to feel glad when I read the news? If so, then was I wicked indeed.'

'No one but a hypocrite could have pretended to feel otherwise than glad.'

'My sister was with me by that time. I never told her the history of my marriage, and my husband she had never seen. She knew only that I had been deserted and was now a widow. Our quiet life went on for a time, and then, by the death of an aunt, I came into possession of a small fortune. I changed my name, as requested in my aunt's will, and after a little while Clarice and I came to England. The rest you know.'

The colonel looked puzzled. 'Pardon me,' he said, 'if I fail to see why you have thought it needful to tell me to-day that which I did not wish or ask to be enlightened about yesterday.'

'I have told you this to-day because yesterday, a little while after you left me, I saw—my husband.'

'Your husband!—But how!—' He stared at her as though he could not say another word. Mora was now the calmer of the two.

'The letter which I received five years ago informing me of his death was sent to me in error. Another man bearing the same name as my husband—a *déporté* like him, had died; and somehow one convict would seem to have been mistaken for the other.'

'O Mora, Mora, and am I then to lose you!' cried the colonel.

She did not speak; but at that moment all the anguish of her soul was revealed in her eyes.

Involuntarily he moved from the place where he had been standing and sat down by her side.

'And I love you so dearly!—so dearly!'

'And I you!' she answered scarcely above a whisper. 'I may tell you this now—for the last time.'

Their hands sought each other, touched and clasped. In the silence that ensued, the leaves seemed whispering among themselves of that which they had just heard; while the stream

went frothing and fuming on its way like some wordy egotist who cares for nothing save his own ceaseless babble.

'And this miscreant has tracked you?' said the colonel at length.

'He was with me but just now. He may return at any moment.'

'Such vermin as he have seldom more than one thought, one want—Money. I am rich, and if'

Mora shook her head. 'He wants more than money.'

'Ha!'

'You do not know Hector Laroche. As I said before, he is a tiger in human form. He loves gold; but he loves still better to have under his claws a writhing, helpless, palpitating victim, whom he can torture and play with and toss to and fro at his pleasure, over whose agonies he can gloat, and whose heart he can slowly vivisection and smile while he does it.'

'And he would make such a victim of you?'

'He has done it once, and he would do it again. He is now passing under a false name. What he demands is, that instead of claiming me as the wife whom he married several years ago, I shall go through a second form of marriage with him under the name he is now known by, and that by such means the dark story of his former life shall be buried for ever.'

'There is no law, human or divine, that can compel you to accede to so monstrous a demand,' exclaimed the colonel in tones resonant with indignation.

'As I said before—you do not know the man. Should I refuse to accede to his wishes, he threatens to go to Sir William Ridsdale—for with his usual diabolical ingenuity, he has found out all about Clarice's engagement—and say to him: "Are you aware that your son is about to marry a person whose sister is the wife of a *déporté*—of a man who has undergone a term of penal servitude?" And, O Colonel Woodruffe! if he does that—if he does that, what will become of my poor Clarice!'

'A scheme worthy of the Foul Fiend himself!' exclaimed the colonel as he sprang to his feet.

There was a painful pause. The colonel was thoroughly taken aback by what he had just heard. At length he said slowly: 'Surely—surely there must be some way of escape.'

Mora shook her head. 'I know of none,' she answered simply.

A few moments later, there was a noise of approaching footsteps. The colonel drew a pace or two farther away.

CHRISTMAS TREES.

THEIR SHADY SIDE.

THE few words I am about to write upon the subject of Christmas Trees for children may perhaps be best illustrated by what originally gave rise to these remarks—namely, the first festivity of the kind attended by my own juveniles. It was given by a friend, whose rooms were narrow in proportion to the numbers of small people she expected, and seniors were therefore not included in the invitations. I was asked, however, to go on the morning of the party to inspect the tree

when it was set up and loaded with its treasures. A goodly array they surely formed. Toys of every kind, most of them very costly; for my friend had been regardless of expense. He calculated that eighty pounds would scarcely cover the outlay upon the articles provided. When I considered how easy to please in their playthings children often are; how tenderly the battered doll or dilapidated horse is sometimes cherished; how the sixpenny toy with the charm of novelty upon it, will put out of favour its guinea predecessor—for children, unlike adults, do not estimate things because of their money value—I could not help thinking this was a sad waste of money. The delicate machinery of those expensive mechanical toys would also run great risk of being put out of order or broken among the crowd of eager children, with no parents present to guard them from injury. Altogether, the gorgeous Christmas tree seemed destined to be 'a thing of beauty and of joy' for a very short time indeed.

The eventful evening arrived, and great was the excitement. My small daughter was a pretty child, and very comely she looked in her dainty lace-trimmed frock and pink ribbons, when, with her young brother, she came fluttering into my boudoir; nurse, proud and pleased, escorting the pair and carrying their wraps. With true feminine instinct, the little damsel betook herself to the tall pier-glass, surveying her finery therein with much satisfaction. 'I daresay,' she said, turning round after a prolonged gaze, 'that I shall be the nicest-dressed little girl at the party!'

'No, indeed—that you won't,' promptly interposed nurse. 'Don't you go to think such a thing, dear. You'll see, when you get into the room, there'll be a-many little ladies just as nice as yourself, perhaps even nicer.' Which speech was a sacrifice of candour on the part of nurse, who was given to regard her young charge as being as good as the best, though she felt called on by duty to nip vanity in the bud.

The morning after a night's dissipation is generally a trying one, when excitement has passed off and reaction set in. Late hours and hot rooms, fruits and pastries and unwholesome liquids at times when healthy slumbers would otherwise have been the order of the night, are apt to have a damaging effect upon the temper. The present occasion was no exception to the rule. My children were not looking their happiest when they appeared carrying a load of things which they laid roughly down and proceeded to turn over with a listless air.

'What lovely toys!' I exclaimed. It was truly an *embarras de richesses*. There were treasures that, if gradually bestowed, would have driven the recipients wild with delight. 'What fortunate young people you are!' I added, examining the glittering heap that they were surveying so discontentedly. 'Don't you think so?'

'The little B—s got much better things!' they murmured.

'This doll, so beautifully dressed'—

'Ah, if you had seen the one Mary got!' pouted the little girl, pushing with her foot the despised doll. 'It opened and shut its eyes, and had a pearl necklace and embroidered shoes.

And Mary was so conceited and disagreeable about it; and so ill-natured, she'd scarcely let me look at it. I hate Mary B——!

'You were great friends with her,' cried the young brother, 'until she got that better doll; and you were just as conceited, too, about your own, until hers cut it out.'

'Oh, you needn't talk, after the way you behaved to poor little Fred H——. Would you believe it, mamma? he quarrelled with that poor child—a little mite of a fellow, not half his size—hustling and bullying him, and wanting to drag away his book that he got for a prize.'

'No; I did not want to drag it away from him. Don't tell stories. 'Twas to be an exchange. I got a ridiculous toy-horse—a little rubbishy thing, only fit for a baby like him; and he said he would take it and give me the book—a lovely *Robinson Crusoe*, that he couldn't read. And then the stupid little fellow howled when I went to get it from him.'

'And you flew into a rage, and smashed the toy; and the governess said it was a shame, and——'

'Oh, come!' I said, interrupting recriminations that were getting angry, and putting a stop to the dispute.

It was not the moment for impressing moral truths upon the young pair; but while deferring these to a more fitting opportunity, I made my own reflections upon Christmas trees in general and this party in particular.

It was plain that envy, hatred, and much uncharitableness had resulted from it—feelings latent, alas! in our poor human nature, that need not premature development. Discontent too, and rivalry and greed were, it would seem from the nature of the entertainment, liable to be aroused in childish breasts. So I locked away the disparaged prizes, until later on, when the satiety produced by a glut had passed off and envious comparisons were forgotten.

We had merry gatherings of small people at wholesome hours, and happy little feasts, and games and romps in every-day clothes. But this was my children's first—and last—Christmas Tree.

THE MISSING CLUE.

CHAPTER VI.—HOBB DIPPING BEWILDERED.

MINE host of the *Saxonford Arms* sits in his lonely back-parlour, looking thoughtfully into the fire, and taking alternate whiffs and pulls from a clay pipe and a beer-jug which stands on the table at his elbow. During the past week, no traveller has entered Hobb Dipping's ancient house of entertainment, and the worthy man was beginning to wonder whether it was within the bounds of possibility that any one would ever enter it again. For several days the snow had been drifting up against his front-door, and for over a week the howling wind had stormed and beat against the walls of the old inn. True, the wind had dropped somewhat during the night; but Jerry—the man-of-all-work, and old Dipping's special informant upon all matters—had reported that the snow-drift was 'alarmin' deep in places; while, if he needed any confirmation of this statement, he had but to turn his eyes towards

the windows and gaze over the frozen waste which extended on every side.

Hobb Dipping was an old man now, and fifteen years had whitened his hair since the fatal night when Sir Carnaby Vincent was shot by the military in his house. The innkeeper's thoughts had apparently at this moment been dwelling upon that catastrophe, for he muttered to himself: 'Fifteen years! I shouldn't ha' thought it!' at the same time looking gloomily at a well-thumbed scrap of paper which he was turning over between his fingers. 'Fifteen years!' muttered old Dipping, who was enveloped in a thick volume of smoke, consequent upon his exertions with the clay pipe aforesaid—'fifteen years, an' no one's guessed it yet. Why, what fools we all be!'

'Hi, master!' says Jerry, popping his head in through the doorway. 'Here's a gentleman come; wants to know if he can be put up for a night or two.'

Old Hobb peeped through a little latticed window into the courtyard, and saw a gentleman of military aspect sitting motionless in his saddle amidst a thin cloud of falling snow. It is Reginald Ainslie.

'Why do you keep the gentleman waiting out there?' is the indignant exclamation of mine host, who seems to be endowed with sudden energy. 'Put up for a night or two! Of course he can; for a month, if he likes. Show the gentleman in, and then go attend to his horse.'

When the man has disappeared, old Dipping bustles out of the room to find something to tie over his head, before he dares to venture into the cold biting air. On his return, he finds his visitor has thrown aside his heavy riding-cloak, and is reclining in an armchair, with every appearance of fatigue expressed in his attitude and countenance. Jerry whispers that the gallant must be right bad, for it was all he could do to help him out of the saddle. 'And his nag ain't much better,' he goes on. 'They ha' come a long bad road this day, I'll warrant.'

Dismissing his vassal hastily, Hobb Dipping pours out a mug of strong spiced ale, and presents it to his visitor.

'I ask your pardon, sir,' said the old man, 'for letting you wait such a while outside; the snow lies so thick that I did not hear the sound of your horse's hoofs.'

Before honest Dipping could finish his speech, he was startled by his visitor making a quick movement and catching eagerly at the scrap of paper which the landlord had a short while ago held in his hand, and which, on rising to receive the traveller, he had laid on the table. There was a short uncomfortable pause, while Reginald eagerly turned over the object in his hand. 'How did you come by this?' he at length gasped out, the tone of his voice expressing great eagerness and anxiety.

Hobb Dipping's first thought was to hollo for Jerry, having some idea that his strange visitor's head must be turned; his second, was to try and remember where he had placed his spectacles.

'My sight is bad, sir,' he said as he fumbled in his pockets. 'I can scarcely make out what you be askin' of.'

'This—this piece of paper!' exclaimed Ainslie,

thrusting forward the identical scrap which old Hobb had been examining at the time of his arrival.

'It come here by accident, sir,' answered old Hobbs slowly and unwillingly.

'Was left here, eh?'

'Just so, sir—it were.'

'How long ago?'

'Well, sir, it's something between fifteen and sixteen year.'

'Gracious powers!' vociferated Ainslie, striking his fist on the table. 'I believe the man was right.'

The landlord stretched out one hand imploringly towards his excited visitor.

'What now?' inquired Reginald, who was vainly endeavouring to peruse the writing with which the paper was covered.

'I want you to give me back that paper, sir.'

'Be good enough, landlord, to leave it with me for the present, and bring me something to eat!'

Old Hobb looked wistfully at the scrap of paper which his visitor was handling, and proceeded to the larder, with considerable misgiving expressed on his countenance. When mine host at length returned, he found his guest a trifle more composed. Reginald Ainslie was still poring over the mysterious piece of paper; but it was evident, from his disappointed mien, that he was considerably perplexed.

'Landlord,' he said in a low voice, when the arrangements for his meal were complete, 'close the door!'

Hobb Dipping obeyed, and then stood waiting, as if for further orders.

'Sit down,' said the lieutenant.

The landlord seated himself in silence, and watched his visitor. After a few minutes had passed in silence, Reginald Ainslie laid down his knife and fork and leaned back in his chair.

'Is your name Dipping?'

'It is so, sir.'

'Will you please to tell me,' continued Ainslie, 'the particulars of how you became possessed of this scrap of paper?'

Old Hobb waxed extremely uncomfortable under the visitor's fixed gaze; he scratched his bald skull, looked wistfully round the room, and then asked in an affrighted whisper: 'Be you anything to do with the magistrates, sir?'

Reginald shook his head.

'If you're not, sir,' went on the landlord, evidently very much relieved, 'would you mind first letting me know your reason for askin' those questions?'

'My reason for asking them,' answered Reginald, 'is because your reply may prove to be of serious importance to me. I have ridden a long way, a very long way, and solely on purpose to communicate with the landlord of this inn upon a subject which may prove the means of benefiting us both.—Do you remember a gentleman named Sir Carnaby Vincent?'

Hobb started a little at the abruptness of the question, but answered: 'Ay, sir, that I do. And haven't I good cause to remember him? That bit of paper, sir, I have always fancied belonged to the poor gentleman. I found it on the stairs while the red-coats were searchin' his room; they must ha' passed it somehow.'

'That was on the night when he was shot here—was it not?'

'You seem to know pretty much about it, sir,' remarked the host, with an inquisitive look. 'I ain't going to deny the fact; it did happen on that night. But excuse me being so bold, sir; you must have been quite a young chap at that time; you can't recollect it, surely?'

'I remember nothing about the matter myself,' replied Ainslie, 'nor have I been in this part before. But Sir Carnaby's attempted escape, and the fatal result, were officially reported to the government and to his friends. You think that this scrap of writing belonged to Sir Carnaby Vincent?'

'Yes, sir; though I didn't know his name till I learned it from the soldiers, after all was over.'

'Why did you not deliver this up to them, when you discovered it on the stairs?'

'Well, you see, sir, it was like this,' replied old Hobb unwillingly. 'I was sorry for the poor gentleman, besides being angry with the soldiers. But little they cared about that. So I thought as how I'd just keep it to myself, in case the man-servant who got off should venture here again. Thinks I: "I'll give it up to him, and disappoint the other parties a bit for what they've done in my house."—I hope your honour won't inform against me!' suddenly exclaimed the old man, who began to have an idea that he was disclosing somewhat more than was prudent to a total stranger.

'My intentions are quite the opposite, I assure you,' said Reginald, eager to set his informant's mind at rest. 'Go on; pray, do not stop.'

'Well, sir,' resumed Dipping, 'as I said, I kept the paper, thinking that I might chance to drop across the man-servant. But though one of the labourers spoke to him that morning, I never see him again; and here I have been keeping this bit of writin' over fifteen year without being able to make out what it means or anything about it. I should ha' burnt it soon, I fancy.'

'Burnt it!' exclaimed Reginald. 'What madness!'

'Can you read it, sir?' inquired old Hobb in a curious tone.

'Read it! No, I cannot; worse luck. Chinese looks quite easy compared with the jumble of letters which are set down upon this scrap of paper.—Has any one seen it besides myself?'

'Only one or two persons, sir,' answered Dipping.—'I didn't want the tale to get abroad—an' when they see it, they turned it over just the same as you're a-doing now: they none of 'em could make it out.'

'What became of the other papers?' suddenly demanded Ainslie, looking up, and desisting from the occupation of gnawing his thumb-nail.

'There were none others as I know of, sir,' replied old Dipping. 'A pair of saddle-bags, I think, was took—my memory ain't quite so good as it used to be. But this I do know for certain—there were no papers found except this one little bit. The soldiers swore hard, and said that the [man who got off had taken 'em with him.'

'Did it never occur to you that the attendant acted most strangely on that occasion?' asked Ainslie.

'Ay, sir, I have thought of that many a time,' answered mine host, scratching his head. 'It was a queer thing for him to do—to be sure it was. The man certainly was not running away cowardly-like, to leave his master in the lurch; he would never have hampered himself with the other horse in the way he did, and then go and cut his way through the middle of the redcoats. He might have got off t' other way through the village without riskin' his blessed neck. It's my opinion, sir, an' always was, that he did it to take the fire off on himself, while Sir Carnaby got away over Long Fen on foot. Very creditable it must ha' been on him, sir; an' had he drawn the redcoats away for a few minutes longer, the poor gentleman would have been clean away. He was nearly down at the foot of the stairs when they challenged him. It being dark, and getting no answer back, they blazed away. I let the soldiers in myself, or they would have beat the door down. But when they called out they would fire at the gentleman if he did not speak, I yelled to 'em not to do murder in my house. But it were too late,' said old Hobb, sternly knitting his brows—'it were too late. God help me! what could I do? I couldn't stop it.'

'It was no fault of yours, my man!' said Ainslie, seeing that the old fellow faltered; 'and do not imagine for an instant that you will get into any trouble by telling me all this. To set your mind easy on that score, I may as well inform you at once that Sir Carnaby Vincent, who so unfortunately lost his life here, was my uncle.' Reginald paused for a moment to watch the effect which this announcement had upon his listener, and then went on once more. 'The affair,' said he, 'which brings me here is of the greatest secrecy, and whatever consequences may result from my taking this step, I strictly require of you that no word of it shall ever be mentioned hereafter.'

'Trust me for that, sir,' returned the landlord: 'it shall never pass my lips to any one.'

Directing mine host to draw his chair nearer to the fire, Reginald Ainslie commenced a narration which is sufficiently long to warrant its being the subject of another chapter.

CHAPTER VII.—REGINALD'S STORY.

'My father,' said the lieutenant, 'was a gentleman of great property, and a close friendship existed between him and the brother of his wife—Sir Carnaby, to wit. They became mixed up with a discontented body of people named Jacobites; and a short time before the unhappy affair which we have been talking about, two warrants were issued for their apprehension. My father was seized at once; but Sir Carnaby Vincent contrived to make his escape for a time, till at length he closed his flight at this place. You know what happened when he and his servant arrived here; they were surprised by a party of military, who had received notice of their movements; and my uncle was shot dead. His attendant fortunately escaped, and returned, after a short time had elapsed, to our family with the sad news. The proceedings against my father, Sir Henry Ainslie, were suspended

through want of sufficient evidence, and he was allowed to come back to his home, only to die shortly afterwards, broken both in spirits and in circumstances. Before his death, he made an appalling disclosure to my mother, the sum of it being this—that, trusting to the ultimate success of the revolution which he had been hoping to raise, both he and Sir Carnaby had heavily mortgaged their estates, and placed all their available money at the service of the king that was to be. Where this large amount had been placed, or to whom it had been intrusted, it is now impossible to say, for my father breathed his last ere he could impart any additional information. The consequences of this act proved most disastrous. Our mansion and estates were immediately seized upon; and beyond a small income which my mother possessed in her own right, we were left with scarcely any means of support. From the scanty information we could gather from Sir Carnaby's attendant, it was considered not at all improbable that the disposal of this wealth had been intrusted to his master; and subsequent inquiries proved that he had actually taken with him in his flight a number of valuable papers and documents. What these papers referred to, it is equally impossible to say; but there has always existed among us a strong impression that they related to the immense sum which had been advanced upon the family estates.'

'Well, sir,' exclaimed old Hobb, when the narrative had arrived at this stage, 'you don't suppose that the gentleman brought all that lump of money here?'

'Not the money exactly,' answered Reginald, smiling. 'I don't credit my plotting relative with being such a fool as to carry that about with him.'

'The soldiers found but little in them saddle-bags, an' he brought nought else with him; I can swear to that,' said Dipping obstinately.

'My good man,' returned Ainslie, 'the documents I refer to might have been carried about his person.'

'Nothin' was found on the body when it was searched, before being buried; I remember that right enough, sir,' persisted old Hobb.

'That is the very point I wished to come to,' said the lieutenant triumphantly. 'You are sure that no papers of any kind were discovered on his person?'

'Quite sure, sir,' replied Dipping emphatically.

'Then just listen to what I have to say,' continued Reginald, speaking in an impressive voice and fixing his eyes upon the landlord's countenance. 'The man-servant who accompanied Sir Carnaby to this place swears that his master corresponded with no single person during his flight; moreover, that he handled the saddle-bags you have just now been speaking of, several times, and remembers to have noticed that one of them contained a small black box.'

The wondering expression on old Hobb's face had considerably increased by this time.

'We have now got to a critical point in my story,' continued the lieutenant. 'Derrick—the man who accompanied Sir Carnaby hither—told me he was the first to hear the sound of the approaching military, and that, being apprehensive of danger, he stole along the gallery with

the intention of waking his master. When Sir Carnaby opened the door of his room, the man was surprised to find him fully dressed. Hurried as their conference must have been, Derrick was sharp enough to notice that his master had been using some sort of a knife, and that the black box which he had before seen that night on the table, had now disappeared, and that the saddle-bags were empty. However, all persuasion could not induce my unfortunate relative to flee, which in itself appears to be very strange. He told his attendant that he would follow him if he would take the horses to the place agreed upon—that more lives than his own depended upon his not leaving the place at once, and several other things equally incomprehensible. Derrick at last unwillingly consented to obey his instructions, and left the house, wondering much at his master's conduct. The two, as you know, never met again.—This man,' resumed Ainslie, after a pause—'this man, Derrick, always expressed a belief—a strange one, truly—that Sir Carnaby was so anxious for the safety of the contents of that precious saddle-bag, that he would not retire to rest until he had placed it in a secure hiding-place. He might possibly have just been concluding his task as the attendant arrived at his door with the alarming news; at anyrate, it seems not at all unlikely that his object in sending the man to a rendezvous was in order to gain time, while he made a desperate attempt to unearth again this mysterious box prior to escaping from the inn with it. Or, it is quite possible that my uncle, being startled by the report of firearms, resolved to let this precious property, which would implicate so many persons, remain in its place of concealment, trusting, in the event of his escape, to return and secure it once more.'

'Do you mean to say that the gentleman hid it in this very house?' gasped the landlord, with considerable astonishment depicted on his countenance.

'That is what I think.'

'Well, well!' exclaimed the old man, 'to think that I should ha' slept an' eaten an' drunk within them blessed walls for fifteen year, with—who knows—half a million of property hidden about the place unbeknown to me! Suppose there had been a fire, sir.'

'It is fortunate there has not been one,' replied Reginald.

'Am I to understand that you wish to search the house?' inquired old Hobb, whose imagination was fired with a variety of wild speculations, among which the probable discovery of a strong case of bullion figured not the least conspicuously.

'The whole house!—certainly not,' answered Reginald with a faint smile. 'I am afraid that would waste too much valuable time. What I want first is a bed for the night.'

'There's the room which Sir Carnaby himself had: your honour wouldn't have no objection to that?'

'Certainly not,' said Ainslie. 'The knowledge that the room has some unpleasant circumstances connected with it will not affect me in the least. I shall sleep as soundly in that apartment as in any other.'

'Very good, sir.' And mine host was about to leave the apartment, when his visitor arrested him. 'One word more, Mr Dipping.'

'Certainly, sir.'

'I have placed complete confidence in you,' said Ainslie, 'and have intrusted to your keeping a secret, the importance of which you must be well aware of. I wish you to guard it carefully. You have kept that secret fairly enough,' pointing to the scrap of writing; 'try if you cannot keep this one too.—Do you understand?'

The landlord intimated that he would do as his visitor wished, and then departed, leaving Reginald to digest such thoughts as this conversation had called up.

The twilight was by this time gray, and very little light remained, while a few solitary objects that could be seen through the dimmed glass in the old casements, looked shadowy and opaque. With the exception of one small lamp, which Hobb Dipping had placed upon the table, the room was but imperfectly lighted by the flickering fire. Outside, the snow was silently falling, not thickly, but in large steady flakes. The wind had dropped, and with it the whirling drift, while the old walls of the *Saxonford Arms* had ceased to groan and creak.

'Sir,' said Hobb, reappearing once more, 'the room's ready. Shall I show you the way?'

Reginald motioned to the landlord to lead on, and they passed out together into a dark draughty passage.

'This here's the staircase, sir,' remarked old Dipping, who was in advance, bearing the light; 'and that be the very place where the poor gentleman fell.'

The landing before them was lighted by a gray ghostly window, which faded into insignificance on the approach of the landlord's yellow, flaring lamp. When this apparition was passed, there came three shallow steps up, then a short dusky gallery, and Reginald Ainslie found himself in the room with which his departed relative had had so mysterious a connection.

'This, sir,' said old Hobb, extending his right hand somewhat after the manner of a travelling showman—'this, sir, is Sir Carnaby's room.'

'Well, landlord,' said Reginald, 'I think I need detain you no longer.'

Bidding mine host good-night, Ainslie carefully fastened the door, and then sat down before the fire, to ponder over his strange situation, ere consigning himself to rest for the night.

WOUNDER AND HEALER.

(THE IDEA TAKEN FROM AGOUE'S TRANSLATION OF AN ARABIC SONG.)

THY witching look is like a two-edged sword
To pierce his heart by whom thou art surveyed;
Thy rosy lips the precious balm afford
To heal the wound thy keen-edged sword has made.

I am its victim; I have felt the steel;
My heart now rankles with the smarting pain;
Give me thy lips the bitter wound to heal—
Thy lips to kiss, and I am whole again.

DAPHNIS.

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